

the Middle East peace process that was declared in Executive Order 12947 of January 23, 1995.

George W. Bush

The White House,
July 23, 2001.

Remarks to United States Troops at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo July 24, 2001

Thank you all very much. It's always a proud moment for the Commander in Chief to see the troops who uphold the values of our country. Especially here, seeing in a foreign land, brings home the true meaning of the sacrifices you make for our freedom.

Thank you, General David, for your kind introduction and your hospitality. Laura and I are honored to be here. I also want to recognize the leadership of the Senior NCO Command Sergeant, Major Marvin Hill. [*Applause*]

I want to know what you did, Marvin. [*Laughter*] You got some of the folks kind of excited when I mentioned your name.

We're honored to be here. I realize that on July 4, you had the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders. I recognize I don't look quite as pretty, but I am from Texas. And I'm proud to be an American, and I know you are, as well, because we represent a great land, a great land.

I'm also looking forward to having a lunch with some of you in a while. The general mentioned that I like PT—I'm going to eat lightly because I look forward to leading a run up Radar Hill after lunch. Are you ready to go? [*Applause*]

I want you to know that there's no higher honor than to serve as your Commander in Chief. America appreciates your service and sacrifices for our country. And I'm here to tell you that.

It's good to be here with the Screaming Eagles of the 101st Airborne. You just lived up to your name. [*Laughter*] I also want to thank the members of the United States Army Reserve, the Air Force, the Navy, and Marine Corps and the National Guard units from Nebraska, Rhode Island, and Ten-

nessee. I thank the civilians and contractors who helped build this base.

My first opportunity as President to address America's military forces came at Fort Stewart, Georgia. It's great to be back with the "dog-faced soldiers" of the 3d Infantry. I think I'll repeat what I said there—Hooah!

And finally, I want to thank all our allies who join in this mission: Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom. It's a long list. It speaks volumes about why you are so good at your mission. You come from many nations, many cultures, and many continents—just like amongst the U.S. military personnel, many races and many faiths, many traditions represented.

Your diversity and close cooperation, General, in the cause of peace is an example of the people of this region. And it's a rebuke to the ethnic intolerance and narrow nationalism that brought us here in the first place.

As we head into the 21st century, we must not allow difference to be a license to kill and vulnerability an excuse to dominate. We will pursue a world of tolerance and freedom. From Kosovo to Kashmir, from the Middle East to Northern Ireland, freedom and tolerance is a defining issue for our world, and your service here has set an example for the whole world to see.

We're making good progress. Thanks to you and those who served before you, the people of Kosovo are able to buy food and find shelter, go to school and get medical help. Thanks to you, there will be elections here in November, elections where we want to see the widest possible participation. Thanks to you, there are fewer arms flowing into Macedonia and a hope for peace in that land. Thanks to you and the service of our forces throughout the Balkans, the region is growing closer to the rest of Europe. But there's still a lot of work to do.

Civil institutions must be put in place and made stronger. Organized crime must be brought under control. War criminals must face justice. And Kosovo must not be a safe haven for insurgencies elsewhere.

America has a vital interest in the European stability and, therefore, peace in the region. That's why I've recently taken steps to

cut off outside support for the rebels in Macedonia. That's why we need you to keep patrolling the border and cutting off the arms flow.

Each and every day your work is important to people of this region and for peace that NATO is committed to building here. America and allied forces came into Bosnia and Kosovo. We came in together, and we will leave together. Our goal is to hasten the day when peace is self-sustaining, when local democratically elected authorities can assume full responsibility, and when NATO forces can go home.

As well, you not only need to have a clear mission here, but you need to have a Commander in Chief with a clear vision, who sets clear goals for our military. And those goals are to be well equipped and well trained, to be able to fight and win war and, therefore, prevent war from happening in the first place.

I know how hard frequent deployments are on you and your families. I know that America owes you a decent quality of life. And those who wear America's uniform deserve America's full support, and you've got it.

I'm going to do something unusual here. I brought with me a piece of legislation, a supplemental spending bill to this year's defense budget. It's been passed by the House, passed by the Senate. Differences were reconciled. So I'm going to sign it here, because it contains \$1.9 billion for pay, benefits, and health care. And by the way, the tax cut is real, too.

I'm also pleased that next year's defense budget request includes an additional 2.2 billion for pay and benefits, beyond the supplemental I'm signing here today. And that will include housing as well as an additional 2.3 billion for improved health care. And it's important for the Congress to hear this message. It's important for Congress to start dealing with next year's defense budget now, to not only include the request we made initially but the amendment to the defense bill.

The Congress has got to keep in mind the needs of those who wear the uniform. And I expect quick response from the Members of the United States Congress. When I ran for promise—I promised America that help

is on the way for the men and women who wear our uniform. Today I'm proud to say, help is arriving. I'm committed that America does a better job of supporting you all.

For every one of you has dedicated yourself to something greater than yourself. You put your country ahead of your comfort. You've committed your lives to defending our Nation's highest ideals. And thanks to you, the march of freedom continues around the world.

It's an honor to be here. It's a huge honor to be the Commander in Chief. Thank you for your service to a great country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:08 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. William David, USA, Commander, Task Force Falcon. H.R. 2216, approved July 24, was assigned Public Law No. 107-20.

Statement on Signing the Supplemental Appropriations Act, FY 2001

July 24, 2001

Today I signed into law H.R. 2216, the "Supplemental Appropriations Act, FY 2001," which provides funding for the Department of Defense and other departments.

This important supplemental appropriation provides urgently needed resources to enhance defense readiness and operations and maintenance; to improve the morale of our service men and service women, and their families; to provide needed home energy assistance for low-income families; to aid victims of radiation exposures associated with the Government's nuclear weapons testing program; to provide a U.S. contribution for the global trust fund to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis; and for other purposes.

I commend the Congress for expeditiously providing critical resources needed to improve our support for our men and women in the military while maintaining a strict fiscal discipline. The Congress provided this additional funding within the budget agreement's discretionary spending limits. The resources I requested for the Department of Defense will help our military readiness and help lay the groundwork for further strengthening